

FLOODPLAIN PERMIT COMMITTEE MEETING  
*201 West Gray, Building A, Conference Room D*  
*Monday, October 4, 2021*  
*3:30 p.m.*

Minutes

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PRESENT: Shawn O’Leary, Director of Public Works  
Scott Sturtz, City Engineer  
Jane Hudson, Director of Planning & Community Development  
Lora Hoggatt, Planning Services Manager  
Ken Danner, Subdivision Development Manager  
Bill Scanlon, Citizen Member  
Sherri Stansel, Citizen Member

OTHERS PRESENT: Todd McLellan, Development Engineer  
Amy Shepard, Staff  
Nathan Madenwald, Utilities Engineer  
Ricky Arce, Parkhill  
Aaron McDonald, E Light Services, Inc.

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Shawn O’Leary at 3:30 p.m.

**Item No. 1, Approval of Minutes:**

All members of the committee were present, and Amy Shepard called roll. Mr. O’Leary called for a motion to approve the minutes from the meeting of September 7, 2021. Mr. Scott Sturtz noted a name correction in the minutes. Mr. Bill Scanlon motioned to approve the minutes with one (1) correction. The motion was seconded by Ms. Lora Hoggatt. The minutes were approved 7-0, with the correction.

**Item No. 2, Floodplain Permit Application No. 643:**

Mr. O’Leary said this application is for a solar farm project at the Norman Water Treatment Plant located at 3000 East Robinson Street, which is in the Rock Creek floodplain. Mr. Todd McLellan gave the staff report. Mr. McLellan introduced the Applicant, Mr. Nathan Madenwald with the City of Norman Utilities Department; the Civil Engineer, Ricky Arce with Parkhill;

and the Project Engineer, Aaron McDonald with E Light Services, Inc. Mr. McLellan said the proposed project consists of a 913 MWh/Year solar farm that will be located at the northeast corner of the Water Treatment Plant facility. Mr. McLellan said the southeast corner of the project site will be located on the banks of an existing drainage channel in the Rock Creek floodplain. Mr. McLellan reviewed current photographs of the site location, location of the floodplain, and the site plan. Mr. McLellan noted that the most recent drawings reflect no solar panels will be installed within the floodplain boundary. Mr. McLellan said the project includes the installation of solar panels, inverters, and AC/DC connection lines within the existing fenced area adjacent to the south side of East Robinson Street. Mr. McLellan said the installation will use the existing gated drive entrance and gravel access road with no additional road surface added. Mr. McLellan said the solar panels will be raised off the ground using a pole mounting system allowing the ground beneath the solar panels to be revegetated after construction. Mr. McLellan said the entire site may be enclosed by a chain link fence. Mr. McLellan noted the Base Flood Elevation (BFE) freeboard requirement in the floodplain ordinance describes a structure as “A walled and roofed building, including a gas or liquid storage tank, that is principally above ground, as well as, a manufactured home.” Mr. McLellan said since the panels do not meet the definition of a structure, there is no freeboard requirement. Mr. McLellan reviewed product specifications for the solar panels and photographs of solar panels that are already installed as part of a Norman Public Schools project. Mr. McLellan reviewed the remaining applicable ordinances for Floodplain Application No. 643 and verified all ordinance requirements have been met. Mr. McLellan said staff recommended approval of Floodplain Permit Application No. 643. Mr. O’Leary noted the change to the site plan which allowed for all of the solar panels to be installed outside of the regulatory floodplain. Mr.

O'Leary asked for comments or additions from the Applicant. Mr. Nathan Madenwald expressed his apologies for the delay in the updated site plan and excitement in reduction of electrical usage at the Water Plant. Mr. Madenwald said this project will result in a 20% reduction in electrical usage and works to meet the goals set in the Climate Protection Agreement and Ready for 100. Mr. O'Leary asked for questions or comments from the committee. Mr. Bill Scanlon recommended approval of Floodplain Permit Application No. 643. Mr. Ken Danner seconded the motion. The committee voted to approve the application 7-0.

**Item No. 3, Floodplain Permit Application No. 644:**

Mr. O'Leary said application is for a solar farm project at the Norman Water Reclamation Facility located at 3500 Jenkins Avenue. The project will be located at the confluence of the Bishop Creek/Canadian River floodplains. Mr. Todd McLellan gave the staff report and said the Applicant, Civil Engineer, and Project Engineer are the same as the previous application. Mr. McLellan said the proposed project consists of a 2.6 GWh/Year solar farm that will be located between the Norman Police Department gun range and Bratcher Miner Road on the west side of Jenkins Avenue. Mr. McLellan said the project site will be approximately 5.7 acres and will be located entirely in the floodplain. Mr. McLellan noted that in Application No. 644, all the solar panels will be located in the floodplain. Mr. McLellan said the project includes the installation of solar panels, inverters, and AC/DC connection lines. Mr. McLellan said the new facility will use the former driveway entrance to the gun range and existing gravel access road to an oil well pump jack with no additional road surface proposed. Mr. McLellan said the solar panels will be raised off the ground using a pole mounting system allowing the ground beneath the solar panels to be revegetated after construction. Mr. McLellan said the entire site may be

enclosed by a chain link fence. Mr. McLellan said since the panels do not meet the definition of a structure, there is no freeboard requirement. Mr. McLellan presented photographs of the site location and aerial maps of the location of the floodplain. Mr. McLellan reviewed the remaining applicable ordinances for Floodplain Application No. 644 and verified all ordinance requirements have been met. Mr. McLellan said staff recommended approval of Floodplain Permit Application No. 644. Mr. O'Leary asked for comments or additions from the Applicant. Mr. Madenwald said the electricity generated from these solar panels will be used to offset electrical usage at the Water Reclamation Facility and should reduce usage by up to 36%. Mr. Scott Sturtz asked about a change reflected on the new site plan that shows the removal of a gravel drive oriented North and South on the site. Mr. Madenwald said after walking the site it was determined a drive already existed that would allow better access with a short connection to Jenkins Ave. Mr. Madenwald said the existing gravel drive will be removed and solar panels will be installed in that area. Mr. Sturtz verified consent had been granted by all parties that currently use the drive. Mr. Madenwald said they had received consent from the Norman Police Department, and added that the entrance was no longer in use. Mr. Scanlon asked if there were any concerns about installing the panels within the floodplain, considering the panels from the previous application were reoriented to be installed outside of the floodplain boundary. Mr. O'Leary said it is always best to work outside the floodplain when possible. Ms. Sherri Stansel noted a typographical error in the location on the application. Mr. Madenwald noted the typographical error and agreed to correct the address listed on the application. Mr. O'Leary asked for questions or comments from the committee. Mr. Scanlon recommended approval of Floodplain Permit Application No. 644. Ms. Jane Hudson seconded the motion. The committee voted to approve the application 7-0.

**Item No. 4, Miscellaneous Discussion:**

- a) Mr. O’Leary said the meeting on October 18, 2021 has three pending applications.
- b) Mr. O’Leary said the deadline for the November 1, 2021 meeting is October 13, 2021.

**Item No. 5, Adjournment:**

Mr. O’Leary called for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Scanlon motioned to adjourn and was seconded by Mr. Danner. The motion was approved 7-0. Meeting adjourned at 3:50 p.m.